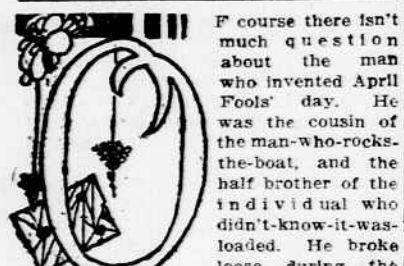


WASHINGTON, D. C., SUNDAY MORNING, MARCH 29, 1914.

IN SEARCH OF THE ORIGIN OF APRIL FOOLS' DAY, THE OBSERVER LEARNS MANY THINGS



F course there isn't much question about the man who invented April Fools' day. He was the cousin of the man-who-rocks-the-boat, and the half brother of the individual who didn't know it was loaded. He broke loose during the middle ages, one happy afternoon, and clad in his buckins and bearing a mace he went forth to have his way with the Goddess Jollity.

He had a merry time. He wallowed seven innocent bystanders over the head with the mace (which weighed twelve pounds), and succeeded in putting the fear of mace into the hearts of a number of friends for whom he had been laying quite a while. And when he had bumped the bumpkins and smashed the standards of polite living he retired home and went to bed.

Came then a number of young men with bladders and confetti. They had their way and disappeared into the historical mists without leaving much trace of their goings.

And finally there came the real April fool bogie. He was a man who was one-third Spanish inquisitor, one-third devil and one-third dyspeptic. And he was the one who devised all of the modern little "tricks" by which the youth of our country entertain themselves when the glorious 1st of April gives them a right to commit assault with intent to kill, or any other crimes without fear of the police.

Why did this mythical individual inaugurate such a custom? Why did this unnamable bogie attempt such heathenish practices? That is what the Observer set forth to ascertain.

Young men might think that trailing this bogie to his primal haunts is a simple thing. The learning of his reasons, almost anybody will tell you, is one of the easiest feats in the world. But let us see what we can do. Time alone will bring forth the facts. And we must have time.

The Observer went into the office of a broker. He is the fattest, most comfortable looking broker in Washington. Looking at him, after you have bought stock on a ten-point margin, you are convinced that you cannot lose. You say to your self that this man is one of the few stable citizens of the country. Stable? Why? Because he is the only one who begins to indicate his solidity. He measures sixty-eight inches around the waist, and possesses four separate and distinct chins.

When the Observer came into the broker's office the broker rose. The Observer was pleased. It is not often that men bound out of their chairs to meet him.

"I," said the broker, hoarsely, "am going to fire that boy."

"What boy?" asked the Observer.

"That cursed, whiffled, obnoxious boy of mine," responded the broker with emotion.

All the time he was reaching in a general southeasterly direction and tugging at himself.

"What seems to be the trouble?" inquired the Observer.

"The trouble," said the broker, with that direct simplicity which comes with great sorrow, "is that the office boy put a pin in my chair."

"What?"

"The first time," continued the broker, "I thought it was a coincidence. I said, 'nothing. Then I sat on it again. And I will swear it was the same identical pin. I am no stickler. I know that boys will be boys. But no faddoed buckwheat-ed, gall-ranged, imitation of a demented gorilla is going to stick pins into me three times in succession without my saying something about it."

He glowered in a grim, triumphant sort of way.

"I will fire him," said the broker with relish, "as soon as he gets back. Furthermore, I think I will kick him out of the office. It will help my feelings some."

This was clearly an unpropitious time to come in for an April fool discussion. But the Observer, knowing that worse things might befall him, plunked in.

"Why," said he, "do you think anybody invented April Fools' day?"

The broker smiled sardonically.

"You haven't got the fool hunch that April Fools' day only occurs on the 1st of April, have you?" he asked.

"That was my impression," replied the Observer modestly.

"Well," said the broker, "you are wrong, dead wrong."

"I don't get that."

"I don't get that," replied the broker, "I will have to speak brutally. April Fools' day occurs wherever you happen to have an office boy around. It isn't a custom. It is a barbaric youthful habit. And if you'll wait until that boy of mine comes in I'll show you how to cure it."

There was a quiet spell while the broker rubbed the place where the pin had been. That broker was evidently all cut up.

"Yes," he resumed, after he had patted himself on the back, "April Fools' day is merely an excuse for three hundred and sixty-five days of foolishness. I suppose that boy of mine thought he was smart. But—"

But this sounded too ominous. It was like the happy thought of a demented man who had had on preparing to behead the lady of his choice. In short, it was rough stuff.

Not wishing to witness the murder of the office boy the Observer stole away. But as he went out of the door he could still hear the broker.

"Just wait until that boy of mine comes back. I am going to flay him alive!"

As an antidote for the broker's rant there is no better antidote than the one which was chosen—the Observer went to a corner policeman. The policeman, who is as Celtic as County Cork, was wearing a huge club and frowning ominously upon the universe.

He knew that he had to start something. He knew that if he went his ordinary way he didn't have enough talent or ability to accomplish a thing.

"So," he said to himself, "he'll add a touch of life to this here dump. O'll make 'em remember me if they don't do this, else."

That, son, he did. He proceeded to feed green peppers to children, and give the blank paper love letters to famous women. In a little while they were talking about him as they had never talked before about anybody. And he was the leading fad of the day. He was a great hit. Oh, yes!

"Phwat good did it do?" says you.

"A great deal of good," says I.

"How so?" says you.

"By givin' the people something to think about," says I. "And I am right about it, as you will agree if you are willing to think over the matter."

And phwat's more, this kind of people are still alive today and they are makin' as much trouble as they ever made before. They are the kind of people who can't do things themselves. They are the hopeless stables in the wharf of the world's creation, and they are trippin' always to justify themselves by criticizin' things that they don't know a thing about."

"But," protested the Observer, "that doesn't justify or explain the cruelty. It is the cruelty of the original April fools' man that I am trying to analyze."

"Cruelty," said the Irish policeman, gently, "is only a term. None of us really know what it means. We think that we are kind when we are cruel and cruel when we are kind. Philosophy—there is a fine warf for ye—don't know no more about it than we do."

"Ignorance, I'd say, is the trouble at the beginning. When we don't understand the theory of another man we want to take him to pieces. A few of us see through the shams of life and into the true meaning of things. Most of us, though, are devoted to the externals."

"And yur April fools' man is simply a type of what we face. He is one of this. He is the kind of man because he didn't understand them. It was broken."

"Ye drunken bum, move on or I'll arrest ye," said the policeman. He had fixed a banalistic glare upon an elderly party who was weaving around without getting anywhere. The elderly party evidently had figured out that he was to trace the lines in a Chinese puzzle.

"Move on," cried the policeman again, ominously.

"I fear that somewhat of an April fools' joke on the old man," asked the Observer timidly.

"Not a bit," replied the policeman, shortly, "the old fellow's drunk."

So the Observer took leave of the kind-hearted policeman, wondering just what the grouch of the original April Fools' day man was and whether it had survived down to the present age.

There was a pleasant little shop, filled with knickknacks of different kinds and the chocolate fudge makes in the cooking.

And there was a girl there. There was the sun of the summer in her hair and the light of the violets and daisies in her eyes. She was a wisp of dreaminess, a shadow of heavenly sweetness. Seeking New York vernacular, the Observer would have called her a "bear." Seeking the civility of Sir Walter Scott and Gen. Booth O'Leary, the Observer would have referred to her as "one of the noblest specimens of womanhood that has ever graced this fair and wonderful land."

How he felt she was there. And in more senses than one.

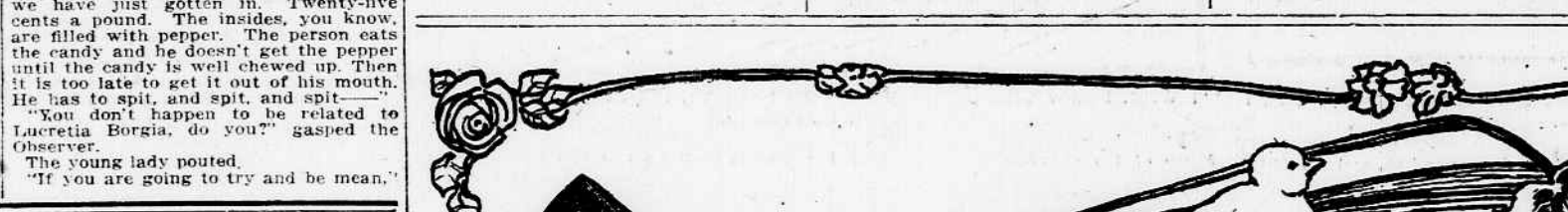
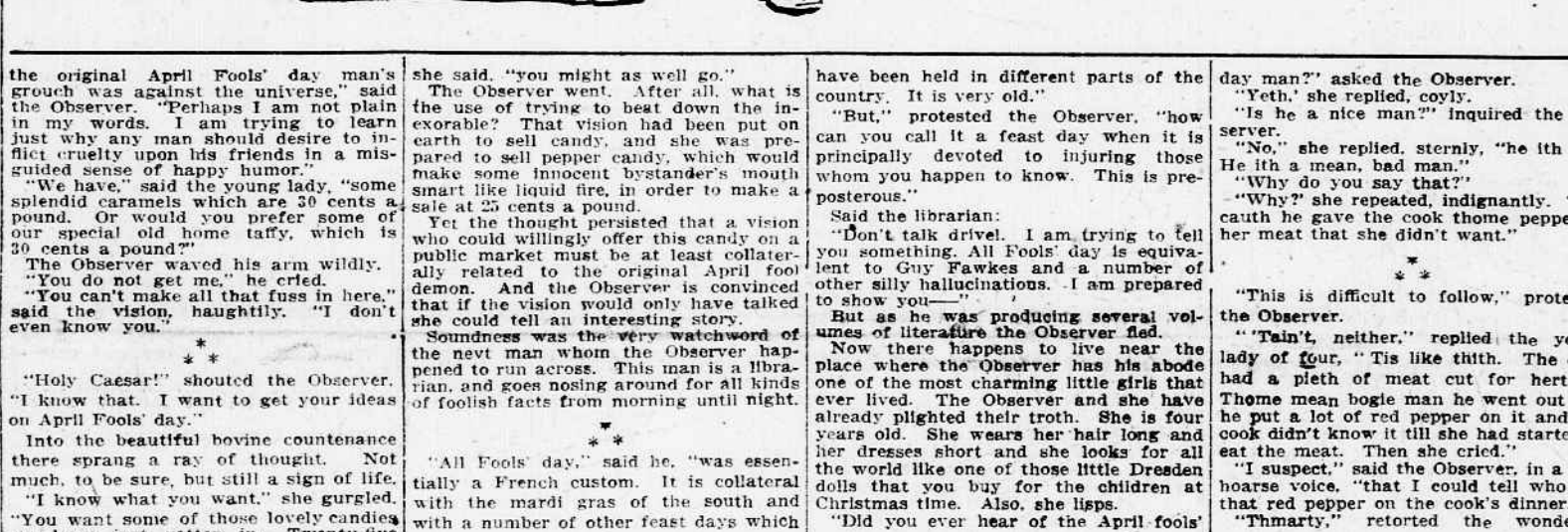
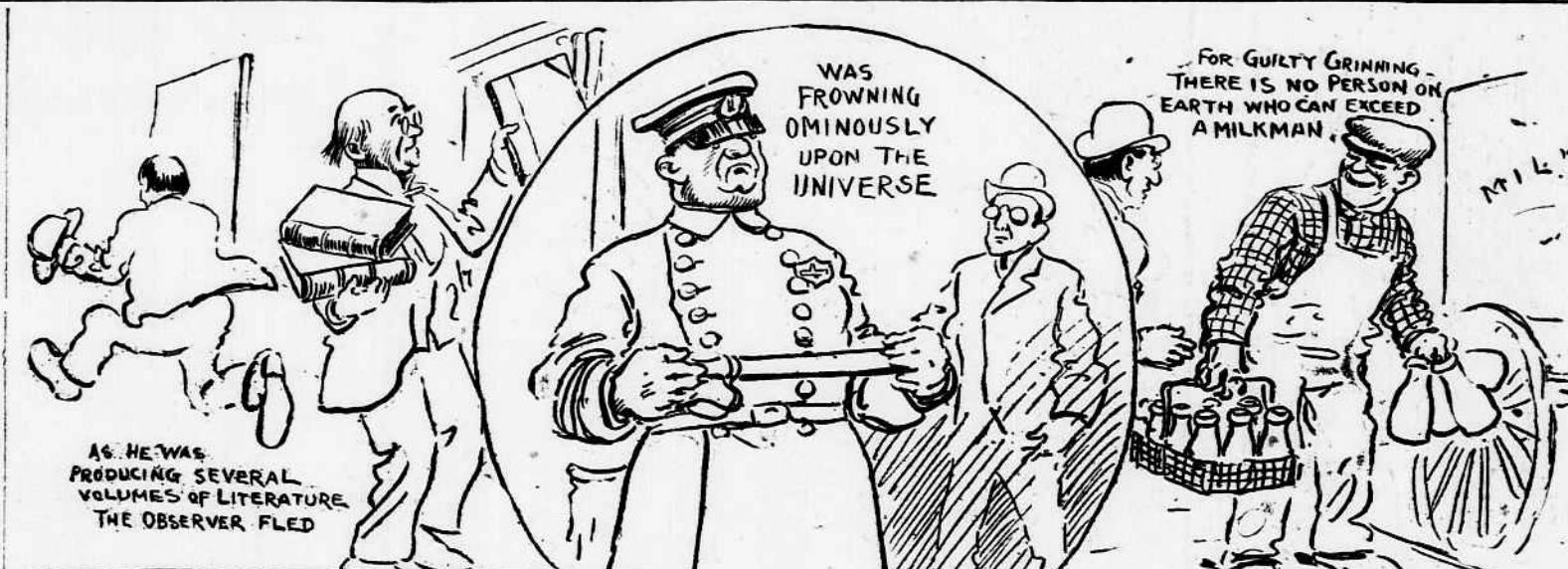
The Observer approached her. He took off his hat and made a bluff at straightening his hair.

"Will you tell me," he asked, "what your theory is of the man who invented April Fools' day?"

The lovely vision tossed her head.

"Huh?" she replied.

"I seek to learn what the reason for"



INFLUENCE OF TANGO ON THE MODERN STYLES

HOWEVER unsettled may be the question of Parisian versus American leadership in fashion, one thing is certain, the tango's influence is supreme. If any further proof were required it was to be found in the Paquin models at an exhibition last week, for in at least two-thirds of the gowns style had been made subservient to comfort in dancing.

All winter the dance has been playing havoc with pretty gowns and preventing their wearers from exploiting the grace that comes with freedom of movement, and certain teachers, between creating new steps, have been desperately trying to solve the mighty problem of suitable dress for the dance.

"Suitable," said Mrs. Herz, who is the moving spirit of the popular Herz dances, "suitable dress means dress that conforms to the dictates of fashion's latest whims and at the same time permits of free movement of the body. It is a difficult proposition in these days of tight skirts, although except for the skirts, fashion seems to have played right into the dancers' hands. Bodices, you know, couldn't have been more practical for the purpose, roomy and sleeveless, or else large of sleeve, waists likewise large and hips unconfined."

"In order to dance well and enjoy it, one must have perfect control of all the muscles, and to have this control freedom is essential. Now the dress of this winter, even slashed as many of them have done, have not been satisfactory. They were bound to catch somewhere, if not at the ankles, then at the knees, and the results have been distressing. It is expensive to be compelled to wear a dress that is not comfortable, and so many, so many women dance somewhere every night."

"I have designed literally hundreds of dances in my mind, but most of them are slight improvements upon what has already been passed upon. What is really needed is a skirt, pouched or in some other way expanded at the knees."

"What a pity these are not the days of the modern age," was suggested.

"Precisely," echoed Mrs. Herz, quickly, "that's the idea. I have evolved one now on those lines. In fact, the one I have on pretty nearly fills requirements. Do you like it?"

It was indeed charming, and when Mrs. Herz analyzed it, really it did seem to leave nothing to be desired.

A black chiffon cloth, gathered evenly all around the top, was drawn from a line two inches above the knees with black satin, and then the fullness drawn into a box plait in front without spoiling the line. This plait was caught loosely from the under side an inch or two below its starting point.

Then allowed to swing free, so that the utmost freedom of movement was assured the wearer, yet the effect was that of an extremely narrow and binding skirt. It really was a clever idea.

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